

Purchase of low quality spares for planes

1097. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been purchasing low quality spares for its planes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the purchase of low quality spares have caused mishaps/crash of a number of fighter planes; and

(d) if so, the facts thereof and the steps taken by Government to purchase only good quality spares *etc.* for the fighter planes?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) No, Sir. It is not correct that India has been purchasing low quality spares for the IAF aircraft. In fact, spares are procured from the Original Equipment Manufacturers/Vendors, duly authorised by the Government of the country of origin.

MIG upgradation programme

1098. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether for MIG upgradation programme, one contract concluded in March, 1996 explicitly stipulated that armament and associated equipment would be new, unused and of current production;

(b) whether the manufacturer did supply 2000 weapons worth Rs. 7.06 crore in December, 1998 which were manufactured in May, 1986 with propellant that was Eleven years old;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken to get these weapons replaced with new ones?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A certain number of armament items manufactured in May, 1996 were supplied with propellant manufactured in 1988.

(c) The manufacturer had clarified that the propellant was tested by them and the quality was found to be good.

(d) The manufacturer has been asked to replace the items. Payment for these has not been made.

Norms for foreign investment in defence sector

1099. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the norms prescribed for foreign investment in the defence sector;

(b) the defence production units which have been identified for expansion with foreign investment; and

(c) the details of time schedule fixed therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Government have decided that the defence industry sector be opened for participation by Indian private sector upto 100 per cent of equity, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), component of it being permissible upto 26 per cent, both being subject to licensing permissions. All types of defence equipments are covered under the decision. No private sector defence production unit, as such, has been licensed for production of defence equipment with Foreign Direct Investment as yet.

Prosecution of Tehelka for using unconventional means

1100. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any prosecution has been launched against Tehelka for having used unconventional means to bring out truth from the Army Officer; and

(b) if so, under what provision of law they have been prosecuted?